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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

Kosovo: Peace Support Operation Or Counterinsurgency?

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3 Commando Brigade's tour in Kosovo was defined as a Peace Enforcement operation despite evidence prior to deployment that ethnic Albanian dissidents were unwilling to conform to the provisions of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR)1244. Ethnic Albanians had conducted an effective insurgency against Serb forces in the region until NATO's intervention in 1999. The aim of the insurgency was to establish Kosovo as an independent sovereign state. However, the international community was unwilling to give any firm commitment to independence for Kosovo in 1999. This fact, combined with the municipal election results in October 2000, further radicalized those ethnic Albanians who had fought the Serbs for independence. The insurgency that had been directed against the Serbs was then redirected towards both the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). The end state was still independence. Two proxy insurgencies were conducted by the Albanian population, one in the Presevo Valley and one in Macedonia. This insurgency became a new source of instability for the Balkan region.

Conclusions: NATO and UNMIK must treat ethnic Albanian nationalism as an insurgent dynamic and deal with it accordingly. In that light, Kosovo's status must be redefined along with UNSCR 1244. Moreover, NATO PSO doctrine must be updated to include COIN techniques. Finally, the NATO and UN agencies in Kosovo must be resourced to effectively fight an insurgency.

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Preface

This paper concerns the dilemma regarding what kind of doctrine should be used to execute peace operations. I hope to address the reason why many governments are reluctant to use the term counterinsurgency or its techniques in the context of a Peace Support Operation (PSO).

This examination is as a result of my own experience in Kosovo as one of the intelligence officers of 3 Commando Brigade, Royal Marines. The Brigade operated in Kosovo from August 2000 to February 2001, during some defining moments of Kosovo's history. I believe that the Brigade deployed with the intention of conducting Peace Enforcement (PE) operations. In truth, Brigade operations subtly evolved into a form of counterinsurgency.

I would like to thank Lieutenant Colonel Lovelock, Royal Marines, for allowing me to use some of his unpublished research on the issue of a fourth generation of Peace Implementation. His research will prove invaluable to reaching any consensus that those who threaten stability must be neutralized by the international community. The most effective doctrine to achieve this is that of counterinsurgency and it should be integrated into PSO more effectively than it is today. PSO planning that only addresses the symptoms of instability rather than the root cause will be an open ended commitment.

I believe that this research is particularly relevant to the decision to establish an international peacekeeping force in Afghanistan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: Kosovo: Peace Support Operation Or Counterinsurgency?

Author: Major Alan Litster MBE, Royal Marines.

Thesis: During operations in Kosovo, 3 Commando Brigade's focus evolved from Peace Support Operations to a counterinsurgency.

Discussion: 3 Commando Brigade's tour in Kosovo was defined as a Peace Enforcement operation despite evidence prior to deployment that ethnic Albanian dissidents were unwilling to conform to the provisions of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR)1244. Ethnic Albanians had conducted an effective insurgency against Serb forces in the region until NATO's intervention in 1999. The aim of the insurgency was to establish Kosovo as an independent sovereign state. However, the international community was unwilling to give any firm commitment to independence for Kosovo in 1999. This fact, combined with the municipal election results in October 2000, further radicalized those ethnic Albanians who had fought the Serbs for independence. The insurgency that had been directed against the Serbs was then redirected towards both the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). The end state was still independence. Two proxy insurgencies were conducted by the Albanian population, one in the Presevo Valley and one in Macedonia. This insurgency became a new source of instability for the Balkan region.

Conclusions: NATO and UNMIK must treat ethnic Albanian nationalism as an insurgent dynamic and deal with it accordingly. In that light, Kosovo's status must be redefined along with UNSCR 1244. Moreover, NATO PSO doctrine must be updated to

include COIN techniques. Finally, the NATO and UN agencies in Kosovo must be resourced to effectively fight an insurgency.

Map Of Kosovo



Figure 1

CHAPTER 1

DOCTRINE

“Peace is not only better than war, but infinitely more arduous.”

George Bernard Shaw

Background

Since the end of the Cold War, Peace Support Operations (PSO) have evolved rapidly to meet the challenges of a multi polar world no longer held in thrall by the tensions between two superpowers. At one point, there appeared to be a realistic chance for the United Nations Security Council to live up to its mandate; that is, executing its “primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.”¹ Within this framework, the evolution of PSO doctrine is vital to understanding the initial estimates made by 3 Commando Brigade (3 Cdo Bde) prior to its tour in Kosovo and how doctrine was adapted with during the tour. In that 3 Cdo Bde was operating as Multinational Brigade (Centre) MNB(C), three of its constituent battalions were Scandinavian, and their understanding of PSO doctrine is also important to bear in mind.

First Generation Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) are undertaken under the auspices of Chapter VI of the UN Charter, “with the consent of all the major parties to a conflict, to monitor and facilitate the implementation of a peace agreement.”² Mandates provide for the maintenance of ceasefire lines and zones of separation or the delivery of aid. This concept implies a relatively benign environment and does little to address the causes of the conflict. As a result, military, police, and peace building activities are often

¹ United Nations Charter, Article 24.

² United Kingdom Ministry Of Defence, *Peace Support Operations*, JWP 3-50,1-1.

conducted in isolation without a holistic approach.³ This approach is often referred to as either the “classic” or “Nordic” model, reflecting the desire to maintain a neutral stance. The continuing standoff in Cyprus, however, bears testimony to the limitations of this classic PKO approach and the failure to solve the root causes of the problem.

Second Generation Operations

The Bosnian experience and the failure to forcibly ‘pacify’ Somalia in 1993 arguably demonstrated that classic PKO doctrine is unworkable in “politically fragile and divided communities, in which clear front lines or legitimate political authorities cannot easily be identified, and where consent among the warring factions is often sporadic and patchy.”⁴ The term “complex emergencies”⁵ was coined by NATO in an attempt to discriminate between “classic” PKO and military forces engaged in Peace Enforcement (PE) operations based on war-fighting doctrines.⁶

John Mackinlay and Jarat Chopra have, as a result, advocated a more determined approach to conflict resolution. Their basic assumptions are that the intervening force is not bound by the principles of consent or neutrality and will be equipped to conduct limited war-fighting if required.⁷ Specifically, “A military force which is properly equipped, trained and governed by the right operational concepts can engage in various intermediary levels of enforcement.”⁸

³ Lieutenant Colonel Ben Lovelock, *4th Generation Peace Implementation*, unpublished research, 2001. Cited with permission of the author, 5.

⁴ International Institute for Strategic Studies, JIIA-IFRI Joint Conference on Building Global and Regional Frameworks for Peace and Prosperity: Political and Economic Security in the New World Order, 2-3 June 1994 (Tokyo: 1994), 5. Cited hereafter as JIIA-IFRI Conference.

⁵ NATO AJP 3.4.1 PSO July 2001, G1.

⁶ JIIA-IFRI Conference, 5.

⁷ Mackinlay, John and Chopra, Jarat, *A Draft Concept Of Second Generation Multinational Operations*, (Providence RI: Thomas J Watson Jr Institute for International Studies, Brown University, 1993), 4-5.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

The British response to this dynamic was to define PE as operations “which are coercive in nature and undertaken under Chapter VII of the UN Charter when the consent of any of the major parties to the conflict is uncertain. They are designed to maintain and re-establish peace or enforce the terms specified in the mandate.”⁹ The most graphic example of this change in emphasis was the creation of the Implementation Force, or IFOR, in Bosnia, to force the belligerents to accept the provisions of the Dayton peace accords. In other words, diplomacy was backed up with credible force to coerce all parties to abide by a peace agreement.

Scholarly discourse in 1994 was remarkably prescient in identifying the limitations of this new doctrine. Dr Matts Berdal argued that the collapse of multiethnic federal state structures, such as the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), occurred primarily at the sub-state level. The UN Charter provides almost exclusively for interstate conflicts and is vague concerning “liberation movements, communal minorities, or political parties.”¹⁰ He went on to state, “The Yugoslav conflict...highlighted the potentially violent consequences of basing the principle of self determination rigidly on the principle of the inviolability of frontiers with regard to internal borders...when these boundaries are highly artificial and largely administrative in character.”¹¹ Berdal’s comments accurately predicted the dilemma that the International Community (IC) would face in attempting to deal with Kosovo, a largely autonomous province within the FRY, and with a majority ethnic Albanian population intent on self determination.

⁹ JWP 3-50, 1-2.

¹⁰ JIIA-IFRI Conference, 22.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Current United Kingdom Approach (The Third Generation)

A common operational approach between the civilian and military components of national power was enshrined in doctrine by the United Kingdom in 1998 following experience in Bosnia. The Joint Warfare Publication, *Peace Support Operations*, acknowledged the need for planning for such operations as civilian-led, with the military creating the right security conditions for civilian agencies to conduct their business. The military role is to control “physical violence in a conflict; producing an atmosphere conducive to the promotion of co-operation; and identifying the underlying causes and symptoms of the problem so as to facilitate reconstruction and longer term settlement.”¹² The hallmarks of this doctrine are civil control, the use of force to back up a mandate and the concept of impartiality above neutrality. In that light, PSO is defined as multi-function operations “involving military forces and diplomatic and humanitarian agencies. They are designed to achieve humanitarian goals or a long term political settlement, and are conducted primarily in support of a UN or Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) mandate. These include peacekeeping, peace enforcement, conflict prevention, peacemaking, peace building and humanitarian operations.”¹³

The foreword to the publication stated, “British armed forces have a long history of the type of operations which are now known as *Peace Support Operations*. While, traditionally, these have been within a colonial or post-colonial context, and owe their origin to the concepts of *keeping the peace* and *counter insurgency operations*, they are

¹² JWP 3-50, 2-4.

¹³ JWP 3-50, 1-1.

now being conducted in a far less certain and potentially more volatile international environment.”¹⁴

A Doctrine Dilemma?

The British Army Doctrine Publication, *Operations*, states that PSO and counterinsurgency (COIN) fall under the category of Operations Other Than War (OOTW).¹⁵ PSO and COIN are therefore stand-alone doctrines within a wider category. An insurgency is defined as the “actions of a minority group within the state intent on forcing political change by means of a mixture of subversion, propaganda and military pressure, aiming to persuade or intimidate the broad mass of the people to accept such change.”¹⁶ The publication identifies two subcategories: those operations in which the United Kingdom is a combatant, either through choice or necessity, and those in which the United Kingdom is a third party to the conflict. Peace Enforcement and COIN fall into the first category.¹⁷

The publication, *Tactical Handbook for Operations Other Than War*, states, “The basic concept and principles of PSO are based very much on experience gained in counter insurgency operations and the military features of ‘minimum force’, ‘local cooperation’ and ‘keeping the peace’ have many common links.”¹⁸ The handbook also acknowledges that OOTW encompasses PSO and COIN as separate doctrines.

¹⁴ JWP 3-50, v.

¹⁵ UK Army Doctrine Publication, Volume 1, *Operations*, (ADP 1), DGD&D 8/34/46, Army Code 71565, June, 1994, 7-1.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 7-6.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 7-1.

¹⁸ UK *Tactical Handbook For Operations Other Than War*, DGD&D 18/34/83, Army Code 7165, October 2000, A-2-1.

Thus, a doctrine dilemma exists at the joint level. Peace Support Operations are defined as having their roots in COIN. However, at the single service level, PSO and COIN exist as different elements of OOTW.

A Fourth Generation?

Current scholarship in the United Kingdom acknowledges that PSO doctrine must be taken a stage further in light of experience in Kosovo. A full background to the Kosovo situation will be given in the next chapter, but the unique nature of that conflict and its aftermath has identified a new element of the PSO equation—that of the “spoiler.” Lieutenant Colonel Lovelock offers a clarification: “UN Security Resolution 1244, the Military Technical Agreement and the UCK ‘Undertaking’ provided the basis for ‘peace’ and the development of a multi-ethnic entity with substantial autonomy. But this did not suit all elements of the population and ‘spoilers’ of the peace process soon emerged. Such elements can be regarded as ‘spoilers’ because their ready use of violence with no basis for authority will destabilize and impede the process of building a durable peace.”¹⁹ Lovelock’s argument is that current PSO doctrine, combined with traditional COIN techniques and the “maneuverist” approach to operations can neutralize these “spoilers.”²⁰

A fourth generation doctrine that combines elements of PSO and COIN is controversial. There is little international consensus to blur traditional models of PSO with COIN techniques. Many Nordic countries participate in PSO missions with a mindset rooted in PKO and are loath to do more than physically separate the belligerents.

¹⁹ Lovelock, 4.

²⁰ The “spoilers” identified by Lieutenant Colonel Lovelock can be redefined as “insurgents” and appropriate COIN techniques can therefore be used within a PSO context to neutralize them. A later

Some countries, such as Germany, refuse to allow their troops to conduct any form of surveillance operations in a PSO context.²¹ As Lieutenant Colonel Lovelock observes, “A coordinated approach to defeating organized crime and other destabilizing factors...includes the use of intelligence led operations in a way that has not been accepted before.”²²

Insurgency

Before attempting to classify the “spoilers” in Kosovo as insurgents, this paper seeks to employ British doctrine to explain the nature of an insurgency and the common approaches used in COIN operations. A link with this doctrine will be made later when examining 3 Cdo Bde’s development of operations and the structures used to execute these operations.

Doctrinally, “Insurgencies tend to arise when state authorities are unable or unwilling to redress the demands of significant social groups...Insurgencies are more likely to occur in states where there are inherent social divisions, based on racial, cultural, religious or ideological differences.”²³ As more fully examined later in this study, these preconditions existed in Kosovo whilst it was under Serb rule and, arguably, after the United Nations established its mission in the province. Politics or ideology also plays a role: “Attempts have been made to categorize insurgencies according to particular characteristics: for example by their environment (rural or urban), or by ideological origin (Leninist or Maoist)...Effective insurgents ‘pick and mix,’ taking those parts of

chapter in this study identifies and classifies the insurgents within Kosovo and some of the measures that were used to neutralize them and their sources of funding.

²¹ Author’s meeting with the MNB(S) Chief G2 HQ KFOR Jan 2001.

²² Lovelock, 35.

²³ ADP *Operations*, 7-6.

previous campaigns which seem to have worked and adapting them to their own particular needs.”²⁴

Counterinsurgency

British doctrine defines COIN operations as, “Military operations carried out to complement those political, economic, psychological and civic actions necessary to defeat an armed insurgency and thereby sustain an existing state authority.”²⁵ Through the long process of decolonization, especially during the Malayan Emergency, British doctrine has identified planning guidelines and a design for operations geared to defeating an insurgency. There are many other good COIN examples that can be drawn from British military history but Malaya remains the most successful. These guidelines were followed by 3 Cdo Bde during its tour of duty in Kosovo. The planning guidelines for successful COIN operations contain the following tenets:

- a. As the problem is essentially political, so must be the solution.
- b. The creation of a coordinated and politically dominated command and control system in the form of joint committees.
- c. The provision of information and its collation into usable intelligence.
- d. A policy of splitting the active insurgents from their potential and actual supporters by civil affairs programmes, psychological operations, and if necessary by physical barriers.
- e. The neutralization of isolated activists using appropriate military operations.
- f. The development of long-term political and socio-economic reforms to prevent a resurgence of trouble.²⁶

The design for COIN operations follows the core functions of British military

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 7-7.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 7-7 – 7-8.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

doctrine, that is, finding, fixing, and striking the enemy.

- a. The overriding factor will be the need to gain maximum intelligence about the insurgents (finding them), without which no focused operation can be mounted.
- b. The design of military operations will then aim to separate the insurgents physically from both their internal and external support; appropriate tactics will frustrate their plans and restrict their freedom of movement by means of deep operations (fixing them).
- c. While selectively destroying them in close operations through physical and psychological attack, and legal action (striking them).²⁷

Doctrine and Kosovo

Kosovo remains a unique theater; the PSO doctrine forged out of necessity and hard experience in Bosnia applies only in a general sense to Kosovo. Doctrine often lags behind reality and does not fit neatly from state to state even in the same geographic region. As Lieutenant Colonel Lovelock admits, “The pragmatic solutions in Malaya half a century ago cannot be seen as a template for action in contemporary peace implementation in Kosovo or elsewhere. Yet they do provide a means of addressing the problem.”²⁸ In that light, the following chapters address the background to the problem in Kosovo, the evolution of operations and doctrine, and how the insurgency was identified. Close police and military cooperation, joint military and civil committees, and civilian direction are themes that should be borne in mind.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

²⁸ Lovelock, 10-11.

CHAPTER 2

SITUATION

“The question is always whether a UN administration can replace an authentic government—and it can’t.”²⁹

Radio Free Europe

Background to Insurgency³⁰

Kosovo has long had a mixed population, with Albanians, often referred to as Kosovar Albanians or Kosovars, making up around eighty-two percent of the population in 1991. The next largest ethnic group is Serbian, at around ten percent, with small numbers of Montenegrins, Gypsies, Turks, and Croats making up the remaining eight percent. This is out of a 1991 population of slightly under two million.³¹

Kosovo was, ironically, the launching pad for Slobodan Milosevic’s rise to power and a land sacred for centuries to both Serbs and Albanians.³² Kosovo was and remains a largely autonomous province of Serbia and part of the FRY. The degree of autonomy has fluctuated since Tito created Yugoslavia in the aftermath of World War II. The FRY is currently the federation of two republics, Serbia and Montenegro.³³ A new Yugoslav federal constitution was adopted in 1974 defining Albanians in Kosovo as a nationality with provincial autonomy but not the status of a republic.³⁴ Under the 1974 constitution, Kosovar Albanians prospered and held jobs across the state spectrum due to Tito’s tactic of ethnic mixing to maintain the Federation. Both sides had grievances: the Serbs in

²⁹ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Balkan Report, Volume 14, Number 79, 24 October 2000. URL: <http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/ops/2000/kosovo-001020.htm> accessed 12 September 2001.

³⁰ For a background to Kosovo’s turbulent history, *Jane’s Balkans Handbook*, August 1999, provides an excellent and concise history.

³¹ Tim Judah, *Kosovo: War and Revenge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 313.

³² *Ibid.*, 54.

³³ William Joseph Buckley, *Kosovo: Contending Voices On Balkan Interventions* (Cambridge: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 476.

Kosovo felt abandoned and ignored by Belgrade and the Albanians still hankered after full statehood for their province.

Serb grievances were the catalyst for Milosevic's rise to power as Serb President in May 1989. The Serb minority in Kosovo provided Milosevic with a platform to air their complaints and develop his own brand of Serb nationalism that would result in the breakup of the FRY. With Milosevic in power, the tide turned rapidly against Kosovo's Albanian population. "In the period between June 26 1990 and August 8 1992, the Serbian parliament passed an average of eighteen laws a month that ended Kosovo's autonomy from Serbia in all spheres of life."³⁵ This also led to Albanians being fired from jobs across the public spectrum in Kosovo and their replacement by Serbs. This was the start of Serb repression that would eventually give rise to an active insurgency by Kosovo's Albanian population.

Parallel Structures: Enabling Insurgency

The initiation of Serb repression also triggered what Denisa Kostovicova has termed Kosovo's "parallel society."³⁶ In the fields of education and politics, Kosovar Albanians chose to opt out of state (Serb) control and run their own underground alternatives. Kosovar Albanian children were educated in private homes as the Belgrade government attempted to enforce a national curriculum that suppressed the Albanian identity.³⁷ Parallel government structures were formed by the Albanian population leading to the "proclamation of an independent 'Republic of Kosovo' which was overwhelmingly endorsed in a referendum, and the holding of parliamentary and

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 143.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 146.

³⁶ Judah, 62-3.

³⁷ Buckley, 146.

presidential elections in 1991 and 1992 respectively.”³⁸ Needless to say, the results of the referendum were not recognized by the Serbs and no Western government recognized the “Republic of Kosovo.” Nevertheless, the parallel system fostered a sense of Serbian occupation among Kosovar Albanians and both sides became increasingly polarized. This parallel society would prove to be an effective tool in organizing armed insurgency against Serb rule by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), or *Ushtria Climitare e Kosoves* (UCK), which first appeared in the spring of 1996.

The Politics of Insurgency

Elections for a shadow provincial assembly were held in March 1998 and were won by Dr Ibrahim Rugova, the leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK). Rugova formed the Shadow Government of Kosovo (SgoK) which existed in name only. Rugova advocated passive resistance to the Serb “occupation” of Kosovo and began to lose respect among Kosovar Albanians as his policy appeared to one of appeasement rather than action. Concurrently, the KLA stepped up their armed insurgency against Serb security forces in Kosovo beginning in February 1998, with a brief pause for the Rambouillet peace talks in February 1999.³⁹ But the increasingly heavy handed Serb response to the KLA insurgency led to international diplomatic intervention and ultimately a NATO air campaign against Serb forces in Kosovo and Serbia itself. During the Rambouillet talks, Rugova was persuaded to accept the creation of a Provisional Government of Kosovo (PgoK) under the leadership of Hashim Thaci, the leader of the

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ UK Ministry Of Defence, Chronology of the Kosovo Conflict, URL: <http://www.kosovo.mod.uk/account/chrono.htm>, accessed 21 August 2001.

political wing of the KLA and leader of the Party of Democratic Progress in Kosovo (PPDK), later abbreviated to PDK.⁴⁰

Once NATO forces entered Kosovo on 12 June 1999, they were faced with competing domestic parallel political structures: the LDK under Rugova claimed legitimacy as the shadow government of Kosovo while at the same time the PDK claimed that Thaci was leader of the provisional government. The LDK long term goals were to create a democratic, independent, Kosovo by peaceful means, and the LDK has remained the most popular political party in Kosovo to date. The PDK want immediate independence for Kosovo and the transformation of the KLA into Kosovo's army.⁴¹ On 3 Cdo Bde's arrival in Kosovo, the SgoK and PgoK had been dissolved by the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). On 31 January 2000, UNMIK established the Joint Interim Administration Structure (JIAS). The JIAS brought together all ethnic groups in Kosovo, including Serbs, from all political parties to share in limited decision-making with UNMIK itself. In that sense, the JIAS was a forum for the local population to formally present their views to the UN.

United Nations Mission in Kosovo

UN Resolution 1244 provided for the creation of UNMIK once NATO forces entered Kosovo. The Resolution defined Kosovo as a province of Serbia, but with "substantial autonomy and meaningful self administration," whilst continuing to recognize the "sovereignty and territorial integrity of the FRY."⁴² UNMIK's first regulation stipulated that "all legislative and executive authority with respect to Kosovo, including the administration of the judiciary, be vested in UNMIK and be exercised by

⁴⁰ Buckley, 481.

⁴¹ HQ 3 Cdo Bde, Op PRESSMAN, Bde 07/11/039A, Dated 8 June 2000, 2.

the SRSG (Special Representative of the Secretary General).”⁴³ The powers of the international administration were unprecedented in UN history, virtually suspending the FRY’s sovereignty over Kosovo.⁴⁴ Alexandros Yannis points out the supreme challenge to the UN: “The UN was called upon to place Kosovo under international administration without a clear road map to for its final status.”⁴⁵

The initial challenge to UNMIK was immense. Kosovo’s entire infrastructure had suffered from neglect and poor management. Kosovo’s natural resource base provided for a small, state owned heavy industry sector. Its economy was largely agrarian with sixty percent of the population working on privately owned farms. The direct intervention by Milosevic in 1989 caused a contraction of Kosovo’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by an estimated fifty percent in only five years. By 1995 Kosovo’s per capita GDP was estimated to be below \$400, the lowest in the FRY. The province’s unemployment rate was steadily increasing and inflation soared to over forty per cent.⁴⁶ In the aftermath of the NATO bombing campaign, industrial production had collapsed due to a lack of workers, power outages, and water shortages. Agricultural production collapsed as herds were either lost or killed and farmers were unable to plant crops. More than one million people had been displaced due to the fighting but amazingly most of the ethnic Albanian population rapidly returned as NATO troops entered the province.⁴⁷

⁴² United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, 10 Jun 1999, 2.

⁴³ Alexandros Yannis, “Kosovo Under International Administration”, *Survival*, Volume 43, Number 2, Summer 2001, 32.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ World Bank Group, “First Donor Conference for Kosovo,” 28 July 1999, 5.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

To deal with these immense problems, UNMIK was divided into four task oriented international organizations presided over by the SRSG. The humanitarian assistance aspect was managed by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Civil administration was managed by the UN itself. Democratization and institution building was directed by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Finally, reconstruction and economic development were the domain of the European Union.⁴⁸ An integrated and coordinated approach to Kosovo's internal problems was difficult to execute with so many agencies competing for scarce resources and without a clear chain of command. Another significant problem was both KFOR and UNMIK sat at the top of the international command chain, with neither organization delegated as "supporting" or "supported." This dualism reflected the reluctance of key NATO states to place their military forces under UN control, which inevitably creates an accountability gap in the chain of command and degrades the capacity of the civilian administration to display credible authority to the local population.⁴⁹

The issue of Kosovo's future status was ambiguous and "fudged" by the international community. As Alexandros Yannis explains, "The ambiguities of Resolution 1244, including uncertainty over the final status of Kosovo, only served to encourage the continuation of the conflict by other means."⁵⁰ The lack of international consensus over Kosovo's future is perhaps the most destabilizing influence in Kosovo today.

⁴⁸ Alexandros Yannis, 32.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

Law and Order

The policing challenge was daunting; there was no rule of law, the prisons were derelict, and there was no judiciary. Parallel administrations and local authorities formed by Serbs and Albanians filled the vacuum of authority left by retreating Serb forces. In areas controlled by Albanians, state owned assets such as petrol stations, hotels, and other commercial properties were seized for personal profit. Mayors appointed by and loyal to the KLA started a system of illegal taxation. Criminal activity was institutionalized through this usurpation of power and local control of economic resources. UNMIK's first task was to establish its authority and replace the opportunists with legitimate and representative bodies.⁵¹ Due to the absence of effective law enforcement and an equally ineffective court system, criminals gained a sense of impunity and organized crime and a black market economy took hold.⁵²

The International Response

The UNMIK Civil Administration is charged with running all aspects of law and order within Kosovo, including the police and judiciary. An international police force was required to restore law and order and train a domestic, multiethnic force known as the Kosovo Police Service (KPS). Even a year after the arrival of the international administration, UNMIK police were still short of international personnel and were only around seventy-seven percent of their authorized strength.⁵³ Some international police officers left before their contracts expired due to frustration with the lack of financial and personnel resources to accomplish their job. The UN bureaucracy set up a pay structure

⁵¹ Alexandros Yannis, 34.

⁵² Cullen, Kevin, "Hatred Blunts Kosovo Police Effort," *The Boston Globe*, 22 April 2000, A8.

⁵³ Alexandros Yannis, 37.

where interpreters and drivers, paid at rates established in New York, received more than judges and court personnel paid at a locally viable rate.⁵⁴

To compound these problems, UNMIK found it difficult to establish an independent and effective judicial system. For the first few months the judiciary was paralyzed by the controversy over what law would be applicable. It also lacked money and security assistance. Most local judges and the population at large were unwilling to cooperate in the area of criminal justice, suspicions being founded upon the abuse of these institutions by the previous Serb regime. There was no tradition of an independent judiciary, local judges faced threats and intimidation, and a deeply rooted culture of silence took hold. UNMIK, therefore, decided in February 2000 to appoint international judges and prosecutors to overcome these problems, but it took months for effective numbers of these judges to be deployed.

Police Structure

The UNMIK police consists of members from UN member states; their level of competence and training, however, varies considerably. The police structure mirrors the division of Kosovo into regions similar to the military division of the province into multinational Brigade (MNB) areas. Each region is commanded by a police officer roughly equivalent to the rank of Superintendent. For 3 Cdo Bde, the Pristina region of UNMIK police was headed by a Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) Superintendent directly responsible to the head of UNMIK police. From a British perspective, the experience of Northern Ireland proved invaluable; joint operations rooms and joint police and military patrols became the norm.⁵⁵ The Pristina region contained a large percentage

⁵⁴ Cullen, A8.

⁵⁵ Lovelock, 15.

of RUC officers who were accustomed to operating with members of the armed forces and joint procedures were quickly adapted from the Northern Ireland experience.

Joint Security Structures: Means to Tackle Insurgency

UNSCR 1244 initially directed KFOR to ensure public safety and order until the international civilian presence could take over the task.⁵⁶ Primacy over policing matters was handed over to UNMIK Police prior to 3 Cdo Bde's arrival in theater. However, KFOR still retained responsibility for providing a "safe and secure environment."⁵⁷ In 3 Cdo Bde's area of responsibility a structure known as the Pristina Regional Security Group was established, which met weekly.⁵⁸ This group consisted of the following agencies:

- Representatives of all four UNMIK agencies for the Pristina Region.
- The head of UNMIK Police Pristina Region.
- The Commander, Chief of Staff, and Political Advisor (POLAD), 3 Cdo Bde.

This structure was responsible for coordinating a joint security policy within the Pristina region and represented all of the agencies involved in executing that policy. There is a very clear relationship between this structure and the organization successfully employed by the British in Malaya from 1948 to 1960.⁵⁹ All of the elements required to find, fix, and strike an insurgent were represented at this committee which was firmly under civil, not military control. Perhaps unique to MNB(C) was the relationship between the police and military intelligence organizations. The RUC deployed some

⁵⁶ Lovelock, 19.

⁵⁷ COMKFOR General Directive 10 May 00, 1.

⁵⁸ 3 Cdo Bde Op AGRICOLA 4 Recce Report, Bde 07/11/039, Dated 15 Jun 00, B-2.

⁵⁹ The BDM Corporation, *14 Points: A framework for the analysis of counterinsurgency*, July 31, 1984,

members of their Special Branch to the province with the task of providing accurate intelligence concerning organized criminals. Intelligence was freely shared at the brigade level between the police and military specialists, again, a very clear parallel to the Malaya experience.⁶⁰ The experience of Northern Ireland, where the military are accustomed to police primacy in intelligence led operations, was the bedrock of this relationship.

KFOR Guidance

The nature of 3 Cdo Bde's operations will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, but warrant examination here in light of the direction given by the Commander of KFOR (COMKFOR), Lieutenant General Ortuno, from the Spanish Army. COMKFOR issued a 10 May 2000 directive to all MNB commanders in which he spelled out his campaign plan. He highlighted the following important factors in the environment which 3 Cdo Bde would face:

- Ensuring that the JIAS continued to function in order to harness the talent and resources in Kosovo within its own administration. Also, to ensure that the parties complied with the agreement to dissolve competing structures.
- KFOR must be prepared to work closely with the civil police and other structures to counter political violence and intimidation.
- Assistance to UNMIK in providing security for the registration of voters and execution of Kosovo's municipal elections to be held on 28 October 2000.
- To oversee the day to day direction and training of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), the evolution of the KLA into a civil protection organization.
- Assist with the distribution of humanitarian aid.⁶¹

KFOR's center of gravity was defined as the ability to generate initiative and

cohesion. Cohesion, even in a NATO force like KFOR, was often hard to maintain as Alexandros Yannis points out: “The problem of enforcing a clear chain of command was in fact bigger within KFOR, particularly between the Commander KFOR and national contingents.”⁶² This was due to the fact that each MNB was nominally under COMKFOR’s control but remained firmly under national command.

KFOR Interpretation of PSO

The nature of the PSO that 3 Cdo Bde would undertake was clearly spelled out by COMKFOR: “UN Resolution 1244 enabled KFOR to enter Kosovo and compel the FRY forces to withdraw (The MTA) and the KLA to disarm (The UCK Undertaking).”⁶³ From the discussion in the last chapter, it is clear that COMKFOR’s interpretation of PSO was one of peace enforcement. However, COMKFOR’s Lines of Operations indicated that PSO must be “conducted with a more ‘offensive’ mindset.”⁶⁴ This definition appears to favor the fourth generation of PSO doctrine advocated by Lieutenant Colonel Lovelock in the previous chapter. If PSO was to be more offensive in nature, this reflected the fact that an element existed within Kosovar society which resisted the enforcement of peace.

COMKFOR’s “Spoilers”

A vague definition is given by COMKFOR in his description of the opposing center of gravity: “The opposing centre of gravity is the ability of destabilizing and extremist groups to break down the will of the people to support the peace process

⁶⁰ The BDM Corporation, D-15.

⁶¹ COMKFOR directive, 2-3.

⁶² Alexandros Yannis, 32.

⁶³ COMKFOR Lines Of Operations May 2000, 1.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

(sic).”⁶⁵ Spoilers or insurgents were also highlighted but not clearly identified by

COMKFOR in his concept of operations:

- Deep Operations. Include the information campaign to highlight the alternatives to extremist violent activities, intelligence gathering sources to enable us to strike at the extremist’s ability to raise or export violence.
- Close Operations. Focused on security operations against the extremists and the information gained from Deep Operations will allow us to strike at their capability for violence. Kosovo is not to become a staging post for extremist operations in Serbia.
- Rear Operations. Focused on maintaining morale and motivation, thereby protecting the sustainability and cohesiveness of KFOR.⁶⁶

At no point in COMKFOR’s directive were these extremists clearly identified; they existed but there was no attempt to define individuals or groups associated with extremist activities. The following chapters will show how 3 Cdo Bde began the process of identifying the extremists or insurgents and conducting operations against them.

⁶⁵ COMKFOR Lines Of Operations, 2.

⁶⁶ COMKFOR Directive, 4.

Multi National Brigade Centre

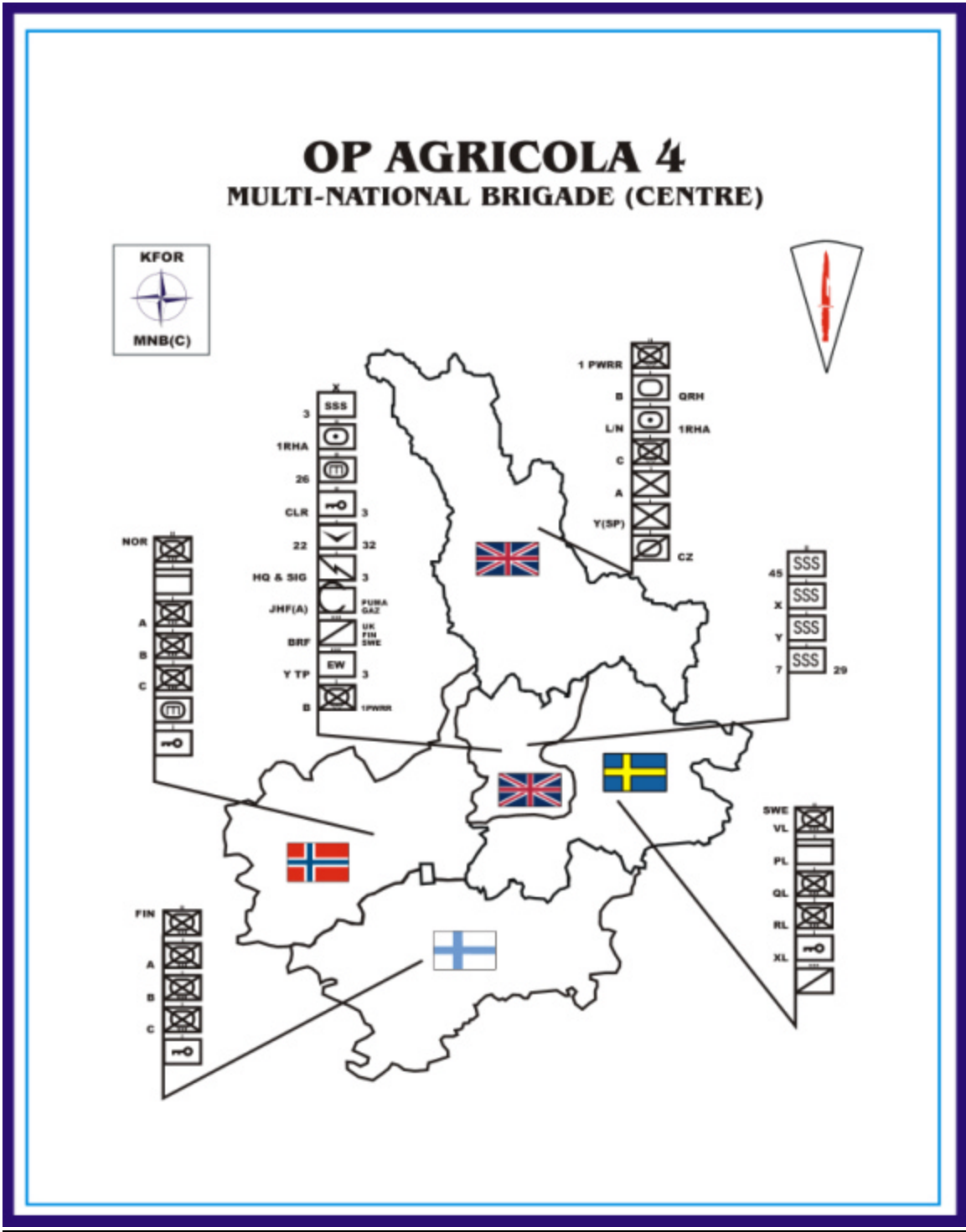


Figure 2

CHAPTER 3

OPERATIONS

Background

3 Cdo Bde formed the framework brigade headquarters for Multi National Brigade Centre (MNB(C)) for Op AGRICOLA 4. The brigade consisted of two British battle groups, one Norwegian, one Swedish, and one from Finland. The map at Figure 2 indicates the inter-battalion boundaries and the composition of each battle group. The brigade headquarters contained the Offensive Support Group (OSG), drawn mainly from the British framework brigade's artillery regiment. This temporary grouping drew together under unified command, all of the organic intelligence, surveillance, and target acquisition assets available to the brigade. The OSG provided focus for the planning and coordination of the deep battle. Subordinate units coordinated by the OSG included reconnaissance, electronic warfare, intelligence, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), aviation, and fixed wing air liaison assets. The OSG provided targeting, "decision detect and track," strike delivery, and post-strike analysis functions.⁶⁷

Prior to deployment, 3 Cdo Bde received military strategic guidance from Headquarters Land in the United Kingdom. The political/strategic objective for Op AGRICOLA 4 was "to support NATO in its mission to maintain an appropriate Implementation Force in Kosovo, in order to provide the appropriate security conditions

⁶⁷ Lovelock, 29.

for continued peace in Kosovo, the return of all refugees and displaced persons and the establishment of self-sustaining civil infrastructure.”⁶⁸

The Initial Challenge

3 Cdo Bde inherited MNB(C) from the British 7th Armored Brigade, which had identified the security challenge as follows:

- Inter-ethnic violence within mixed communities. This included retributive attacks and intimidation against the Serb and Roma minorities. This was having a destabilizing effect on the whole enterprise and the viability of UNMIK.
- Hard line politically inspired violence or extremism amongst Kosovo Albanians and directed against Serbs. This was a serious challenge to the task of creating a secure environment and was developing an increasing degree of sophistication in terms of techniques and the necessary responses.
- Crime based violence – linked to the above and the reality of widespread movement and trafficking of narcotics and black market goods by organized criminal networks across regional borders.⁶⁹

The Initial Response

3 Cdo Bde’s tour of duty began in August 2000. The initial challenge was to reduce the high level of interethnic violence in the brigade area. This was viewed by the international community as an attempt to ethnically cleanse the province of all non-Albanian citizens. Eric Morris, the UN special envoy, said, “It seems the minority community is being hunted down one by one and extreme members of the society will not rest until the province is ethnically cleansed.”⁷⁰

⁶⁸ HQ Land Mounting Order for Operation AGRICOLA, G3 Ops 31/14, Dated 10 Feb 2000, 4.

⁶⁹ Lovelock, 22.

⁷⁰ Christian Jennings, “UN Warns Kosovars to Stop Ethnic Cleansing,” *Daily Telegraph*, 20 February 2001. URL: <http://portal.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml>, accessed 12 September 2001.

To counter this, Brigadier General Robert Fry, the commander of MNB(C), decided on a policy of maneuver as well as surveillance operations rather than the tactic of static guard posts normally associated with PSO. MNB(C) built a security structure based on the absolute minimum of fixed installations. A program of both overt and covert patrolling in several dimensions was launched, coordinated by the OSG. Air observation and ground movement were coordinated to create doubt in the minds of the insurgents that they would be able to conduct acts of terrorism and get away with it.⁷¹

The Pattern of Violence

The opening gambit was to prevent acts of terrorism rather than concentrate on disrupting them. The intelligence picture upon arrival in theater was complex and there did not at first appear to be a pattern to the incidents that MNB(C) was facing on a daily basis. Accurate human intelligence is vital to conducting successful operations but this takes a great deal of time to develop and great care must be taken in exploiting the information so as not to prejudice the source.

A major task involved the analysis of incidents to determine whether there was a coordinated terrorist campaign or a collection of random, violent acts of interethnic hatred. In August 2000 the Centre for Cooperation with the UN (CCUN) was attacked with an Improvised Explosive Device (IED). The CCUN was the de facto Serb embassy in the capital, Pristina. The incident was relatively innocuous in relation to other incidents in that nobody was killed. However, some aspects indicated that it was part of a wider and more coordinated campaign: a sophisticated military timing device (SU-24) was used to activate the device, the method of attack on a guarded building showed that

⁷¹ Tim Ripley, An Interview with Brigadier Robert Fry, *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 27 September 2000, URL http://www.janes.com/defence/interviews/dw010822_i.shtml, accessed 12 September 2001.

some prior reconnaissance had taken place, and the perpetrator had faced a great deal of personal risk in conducting the attack. This attack was initially overshadowed by other concerns such as the deadline of municipal elections which were to be held in the province on 28 October. Of more pressing concern were two major operations that MNB(C) conducted against a Serb Special Forces cell operating in the Serb enclave of Gracanica on the outskirts of Pristina. Two major operations were launched on 18 September and 1 November respectively, neutralizing the cell members and their support structure.

The Municipal Elections

The municipal elections were of great concern as there was real potential for politically inspired violence which would have disrupted the province's first free and fair elections. There were wider concerns than the mechanics of organizing an election. The International Crisis Group had identified "long standing Albanian unease over the perceived weakness of their international rulers which risks turning more sharply toward anger unless the international community moved quickly to involve Kosovars in their own democratic self rule."⁷² The elections had to go smoothly; it was a major test of UNMIK's credibility and a test of the Albanian population's willingness to embrace democracy. MNB(C)'s mission was to maintain a safe and secure environment during the elections. The main threat to security was the prospect of intra-ethnic violence between the Albanian political parties.

There was also the very real fear that the PDK would attempt to use force to intimidate the population into not voting for the LDK, which appeared to be the most

⁷² International Crisis Group, *Elections in Kosovo: Moving Toward Democracy?* 7 July 2000, URL: <http://www.intl-crisis-group.org/projects/showreport.cfm?reportid=7>, accessed 12 September 2001.

popular party in pre-election polls. This fear was well justified; during the KLA's active insurgency against the Serbs, they had installed loyal PDK members as leaders in villages that they had captured from the Serbs. As Tim Judah points out, "The KLA was also seeking to stamp its authority on areas that it controlled and to make sure that the LDK understood Mao's dictum that power grew from the barrel of a gun. LDK activists were arrested and according to one UN report the activity of KLA 'tribunals' suggested a 'pattern of arbitrary arrest and execution'."⁷³

A major security operation was launched to protect local LDK candidates from intimidation; no such assistance was given to PDK candidates, a clear indication as to which side was likely to resort to violence.⁷⁴ Establishing Western democratic norms was going to be difficult to achieve. As Brigadier Fry observed, "The Kosovar population mouths the slogans of democracy but has no grasp of its processes. That democracy is a demanding political condition and not simply a matter of winner takes all is yet to find a place in the Kosovar consciousness."⁷⁵

The elections were won by the LDK with a majority of over seventy percent of the vote. The Serbs in Kosovo did not participate. The political aims of the PDK were frustrated; there had been some pre-election violence but the OSCE, responsible for the poll, deemed it to be a free and fair election. The men who believed that they had liberated Kosovo had been firmly rejected by the population. This appears to have been the catalyst for Albanian extremists to step up their campaign for independence using the tool of insurgency rather than democracy.

⁷³ Tim Judah, 190-1.

⁷⁴ Major General Fry CB MBE, Commandant General Royal Marines, e-mail to author, subject: "Protection for PDK/LDK Candidates," 17 December 2001.

A Change in Focus

There was a growing realization within the MNB(C) headquarters that the threat to Kosovo's stability could be clearly identified. Brigadier Fry captured the nature of the threat when he remarked:

At the centre of Kosovar society is a profoundly revisionist nexus which comprises crime, para-military and extremist political organizations, each indivisible from the other. It is not formally constructed but involves different individuals coalescing together opportunistically in pursuit of local advantage. It has its roots in the UCK/PDK axis and became disenchanted with the democratic process when the PDK was unable to convert the UCK legacy into votes at the municipal elections. The rise in Albanian extremist violence dates from this time and marks a break with conventional politics and a return to the medieval habits which this grouping is most comfortable.⁷⁵

A Change Of Pace

The August 2000 attack on the CCUN was reassessed as being the work of a well organized and well equipped insurgent cell.⁷⁷ Other incidents began to confirm the suspicion that an active insurgency was being waged against all those who obstructed this group's narrow aims. In October 2000 a large IED destroyed part of a building that housed Stanmir Vuckicievic, the de facto Serb ambassador to Kosovo. The building was guarded by two armed UNMIK police officers, indicating that the perpetrators were both determined and willing to take risk to achieve their objective. The attack was the largest IED that had been used in the Province until that time and had the hallmarks of a well planned and professional operation. The conclusion was quickly reached that this was not random ethnic cleansing but a coordinated and well resourced campaign. The earlier attack on the CCUN was assessed to be a trial run for this more spectacular attack.

⁷⁵ Major General R A Fry MBE, "A View from Kosovo," *Royal United Services Institute Journal*, June 2001, 13.

⁷⁶ Major General R A Fry MBE, 14.

Vuckicievic was not at home at the time but his driver later died of injuries sustained during the incident.

In September 2000 Rexhep Luci, the Pristina buildings regulation director, was murdered outside his apartment. His duties had made him a controversial figure in Kosovo as he was responsible for demolishing illegally built commercial premises. This was particularly relevant in Pristina because many bars and brothels had been built in the security vacuum after Op ALLIED FORCE.⁷⁸ These buildings generated a considerable income for organized criminals, many of whom had links to the extremists identified above. Luci was murdered after one of his decisions threatened the income of this group.

On 14 October 2000, MNB(C) conducted a large operation (Op NORFOLK) that targeted Sabit Gechi, an ex-KLA commander, organized criminal, and prime suspect in the murder of Rexhep Luci. Gechi was thought to be the most prominent organized criminal in Pristina and a proportion of the money that he made was used to finance the terrorist acts carried out by Albanian insurgents. The raid targeted 13 bars, brothels, and private homes linked to Gechi and his family. The operation led to 28 arrests, the seizure of 15 weapons, and the recovery of \$750,000 believed to be profits from drugs, prostitution, and extortion.⁷⁹ Op NORFOLK hit at the capacity of Albanian extremists to finance their activities.

⁷⁷ For the purposes of this study, terrorist incidents have been categorized as one of the methods used by the insurgents during their campaign.

⁷⁸ Philip Sherwell and David Thompson, "British Troops Target Guns and Crime in Kosovo," *Daily Telegraph*, 29/10/2000, URL: <http://portal.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml>, accessed 12 September 2001.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

The Demise of Milosevic

October was memorable in Kosovo not only as the month of the municipal elections but also the month that Slobodan Milosevic was ousted from power by Vojislav Kostunica. This had a profound impact on Albanian extremists and may have contributed to their increasing willingness to use violence. As Venton Surroi explains, “Some commentators have noted that Milosevic’s ouster may, paradoxically, hurt the interests of independence-minded Kosovars. According to their logic, as long as Milosevic remained in power as Europe’s ‘bogeyman,’ Kosovars could be sure of Western attention and protection. With democratic rule in Belgrade, the West may seek to reduce its commitment to Kosova (sic) and push for the province’s reintegration into Serbia.”⁸⁰

The Final Act

From October 2000 until the end of 3 Cdo Bde’s tour in February 2001, most of MNB(C)’s deep operations were aimed at monitoring Albanian extremists but there were no significant incidents following the October attack on the ambassador’s residence. On 17 February 2001 a Command Wire IED (CWIED) destroyed a bus carrying Serb civilians from Gracanica in Kosovo to Serbia to visit family graves on the Orthodox Day of the Dead. The 150 lb device killed seven Serb civilians, including children, and wounded forty others. The method of attack was professional, well researched, and a calculated terrorist act. The explosive device was hidden in a culvert under the road and detonated by a command wire which ran a few hundred feet to the firing point which overlooked the road. The Serb bus was part of a weekly convoy which was protected by NATO troops on its passage through Kosovo. The attack was almost military in both

⁸⁰ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Balkan Report, Volume 14, Number 79, 24 October 2000. URL: <http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/ops/2000/kosovo-001020.htm> accessed 12 September 2001.

planning and execution, an indication that the extremists were gaining confidence and experience. Such attacks were a hallmark of the KLA's insurgency against the Serbs and had occurred in almost the same fashion on the same stretch of road a few years previously. The fact that it occurred in the last week of 3 Cdo Bde's tour left many in the headquarters believing that this was the extremists making a final gesture to show that MNB(C)'s successful operations against them had not affected their ability to wage war. John Simpson, writing for the *Daily Telegraph*, averred, "There seems no serious reason to doubt that it was carried out by Kosovar Albanian extremists, presumably akin to those who, during an embarrassing period in 1998-99, were trained, equipped and armed by Washington in order to counter the viciousness of Milosevic's men there."⁸¹ These linkages will be further explored in the next chapter as the insurgents are defined and identified.

⁸¹ John Simpson, Simpson on Sunday: "Kosovo Terror Shows Need for Balkans Rethink," *Daily Telegraph*, 18/02/2001, URL URL: <http://portal.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml>, accessed 12 September 2001.

CHAPTER 4

THE INSURGENTS

Introduction

The KLA began its insurgency against Serb security forces in the mid to late 1990s which led to an escalation of violence and ultimately to Op ALLIED FORCE. The KLA was ruthless in the manner in which it conducted the insurgency, often attacking ethnic Albanians from rival groups who refused to join it.⁸² This was recognized very early on by the West. On 23 February 1998, Robert Gelbard, the US special envoy to the region, defined the KLA as follows: “The KLA is, without any questions a terrorist group.”⁸³

KLA aims were very clear in 1998. Their first spokesman, Jakup Krasniqi, stated, “The KLA was intent on forming a greater Albania which would consist of Kosovo, Albania and Albanian-inhabited parts of Macedonia and Montenegro.”⁸⁴ The Serbs were conducting clumsy counterinsurgency operations but the KLA’s goal was always independence for Kosovo.

Expansion of Insurgency

Once the Serbs left Kosovo under the terms of the Military Technical Agreement, the insurgents were robbed of a focus. Alexandros Yannis explains how this was resolved: “Violence, against non-Albanians gradually diversified and mutated into a systematic and often, more sophisticated pattern of criminal activity. Organized crime, political extremism and the continued thirst for vengeance all converged. Intimidation

⁸² *Jane’s Balkans Handbook*, Jane’s Information Group, London, August 1999,14.

⁸³ Judah,138.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*,168.

and harassment resulted in forced sales of Serb properties and a continued Serb exodus.”⁸⁵ The KLA may have agreed to disarm but the former leader of the LPK, Pleurat Sejdiu, stated, “The armed struggle will not stop until the independence of Kosovo....Our forces will be those who liberate Kosovo.”⁸⁶ Even after the arrival of NATO troops into Kosovo it was clear that the Albanian insurgency would continue. As Yannis observes, “Albanians were prepared to continue their struggle by other means, as illustrated by the violent division of Mitrovica and its ‘sister crisis’ in the Presevo Valley in southern Serbia.”⁸⁷

The Means of Insurgency: The Kosovo Liberation Army

The KLA has very clear roots. “The tiny and illegal Albanian groups which eventually spawned the KLA found that the only politically profitable way to express their nationalism was in the language of extreme Marxism-Leninism.”⁸⁸ Interestingly, the KLA was forced to disarm as part of the “Undertaking” signed by its leader, Agim Ceku, as part of the Military Technical Agreement on 21 June 1999. This required the KLA to hand over its weapons to NATO and cease its insurgency within 90 days of that date.⁸⁹ The results, however, were not convincing; the HQ Land mounting instruction issued to HQ 3 Cdo Bde on 10 Feb 00 noted: “Factions of the KLA have continued to violate this undertaking. Although a substantial number of weapons have been handed over, many more are in circulation and weapon procurement continues.”⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Yannis, 38.

⁸⁶ Judah, 210.

⁸⁷ Yannis, 35.

⁸⁸ Tim Judah, “Greater Albania?”, *Survival*, Volume 43, Number 2, Summer 2001, 9.

⁸⁹ UK Ministry Of Defence, Chronology of the Kosovo Conflict, URL: <http://www.kosovo.mod.uk/account/chrono.htm>, accessed 21 August 2001.

⁹⁰ HQ LAND Mounting Instruction, 3.

KLA Transformation: Fact or Fiction?

The “Undertaking” witnessed the transformation of the KLA into a civil protection organization labeled the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), which was tasked to provide “disaster response services; perform search and rescue; provide a capacity for humanitarian assistance in isolated areas; (and) assist in de-mining and contribute to rebuilding infrastructure and communities.”⁹¹ The major challenge for the transformation was to covert the 10,000 former insurgents and turn them into a demilitarized KPC consisting of 3,000 men and 2,000 reservists.⁹² But what of the 5,000 men who were now unemployed? They fought for Kosovo’s independence which was not forthcoming; had recent experience in fighting an insurgency; and remain unlikely to find employment in the near future. This proved fertile recruiting ground for the “foot soldiers” of a renewed insurgency. Not surprisingly, these former insurgents have not been idle: “Former members of the hibernating KLA control a significant amount of the illegal trafficking in fuel, food and cigarettes. Weapon smuggling has persisted and a robust trade in women for sex has emerged. Most disturbing have been unverified estimates that Kosovo mafia groups are now supplying up to forty percent of the heroin sold in Europe and North America.”⁹³

The KLA had its own secret police, the PU, which was still active as Judah has observed: “Even after the demilitarization of the KLA, killings continued, sometimes

⁹¹ Major Ben Farrell, *KLA to KPC The Transformation Must Go On*, Joint Services Command & Staff College, Defence Research Paper, AC&SC, Number 4, September 2000 – July 2001, 16.

⁹² Ben Farrell, 13-16.

⁹³ Justin Eldridge, “Kosovo: Land Of Uncertainty,” *European Security*, Volume 10, Number 2, Summer 2001, 49.

committed by the ‘secret police’ which was connected to Thaci’s ministry of the interior.”⁹⁴

Farrell’s research indicates that many of the current KPC leadership have been involved in the KLA in some form for nearly 20 years and they are not likely to accept the current KPC as the solution to their struggle.⁹⁵ Even Agim Ceku, the leader of the KPC, has stated that the KPC is the KLA in mothballs.⁹⁶

Some former KLA men have interesting new jobs in Kosovo. Nuridin Ibishi, an ex-KLA man, was head of the Kosovo Police Force until 1990 when the Serbs removed him; he is now head of the recently formed Kosovo Police Service (KPS). Latif Gashi was the intelligence officer of the LLAP Zone of the KLA and is now the Deputy Director of the Kosovo Intelligence Service (KSHiK).⁹⁷ Why a fledgling state with no autonomy requires an “intelligence service” is not clear, but both men are in positions of considerable influence in the new Kosovo and by background are probably linked to the “nexus” described by Brigadier Fry in the last chapter.

The transformation of the KLA into the KPC has been a challenge that the international community has been unwilling to solve or finance adequately.⁹⁸ The KLA was the means used to conduct an insurgency against the Serbs; a continued insurgency against NATO would likely be formed from a core of ex-KLA and current KPC members. Brigadier Fry summed up the dilemma in October 2000: “The demilitarization of the KLA is the greatest achievement of the last 15 months. The re-militarization of the

⁹⁴ Judah, 290.

⁹⁵ Major Ben Farrell, a British Army officer, served in Kosovo and conducted interviews with many former KLA men and current KPC members in Pristina in January 2001 for a UK Command & Staff College Defense Research Paper, 9.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

KPC is the greatest danger we face in the next year.’⁹⁹

Exporting Insurgency: The UCPMB

The Ground Safety Zone (GSZ) is a five kilometer buffer zone inside Serbian territory directly adjacent to Kosovo. The southeastern portion of the GSZ has a large Albanian population. The GSZ was originally set up in 1999 to separate NATO-led forces in Kosovo from Yugoslav security forces in Serbia and Montenegro.

Unfortunately, it also constituted a ready made power vacuum: only lightly armed Serbian and Montenegrin police were allowed in the GSZ. On 26 January 2000 two brothers were killed by the Serbian police in Dobrosin, which lies inside the GSZ. American troops confirmed reports that Dobrosin was in the hands of armed Albanians.¹⁰⁰

This was the first time that the world heard of the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac, or UCPMB, named after three towns in southern Serbia with an ethnic Albanian majority. This group’s aims were to liberate the towns in southern Serbia from Serb rule, imitating the early insurgency attempted by the KLA in neighboring Kosovo.

This was an embarrassing situation for KFOR; the Military Technical Agreement forbade heavily armed Serb security forces from operating in the GSZ and from dealing with insurgents who were in Serb territory. However, NATO forces responsible for the adjacent sector of the GSZ bordering on Kosovo were unable to prevent scores of armed men from Kosovo crossing the boundary and joining the UCPMB.¹⁰¹ This was not a

⁹⁹ Sherwell and Thompson.

¹⁰⁰ Judah, *Survival*, 10.

¹⁰¹ Kosovo and Serbia share a boundary not a border as Kosovo is a constituent element of the FRY under international law.

situation that would endear NATO to the new Belgrade government led by Vojislav Kostunica.¹⁰²

The insurgents went a step further and threatened NATO troops directly, the first time that KFOR had faced a direct threat from ethnic Albanians. A UCPMB commander remarked, “NATO came to Kosovo to help Albanians, but if they come here without reaching an agreement we would resist them as we resisted the Serbs. We know we could not win, but we would take some of them with us.”¹⁰³ Links with the KLA/KPC were inevitable, as Judah discovered: “Shaban Shala – head of the local branch of the KPC in Gniljane, close to the GSZ (and an ex KLA commander), claimed that his men had been involved in a clash with Serb units infiltrating from the border. When asked what his men were doing up on the border squaring off with Serbs when they were meant to be shoveling snow, he said: ‘I have told you enough already’.”¹⁰⁴ Clear links between the KPC/KLA and the UCPMB were emerging. History repeated itself as the NATO General Secretary labeled the UCPMB as an “extremist” group.¹⁰⁵ Evidence emerged regarding a group linked to the KLA and willing to use violence against NATO troops to achieve its aims. Judah sums it up: “These circumstances suggest that former KLA men, on a triumphant high and convinced that the West was unconditionally behind them, opportunistically decided to reconstitute a guerilla force (the UCPMB) to assert irredentist claims.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Christian Jennings, “We’ll Fight NATO Troops Warn Albanian Rebels,” *Daily Telegraph*, 22/12/2000, URL: <http://portal.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml>, accessed 12 September 2001.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Judah, *Survival*, 10.

¹⁰⁵ Christian Jennings, “We’ll Fight NATO Troops Warn Albanian Rebels.”

¹⁰⁶ Judah, *Survival*, 11.

An International Insurgency-The NLA

Concurrent with the UCPMB insurgency in southern Serbia, KFOR received reports that armed Albanians were crossing from Kosovo into Macedonia in late February 2001. A new group was emerging, the National Liberation Army (NLA).¹⁰⁷ A few hundred former KLA fighters of Macedonian origin began training and organizing in the summer of 2000, establishing training bases and arms caches along the mountainous border between Kosovo and Macedonia.¹⁰⁸ Their aims were simple: to “free” their countrymen from the (Slav) rule of the Macedonian government and to drive Albanians in Kosovo into supporting the nationalist cause.¹⁰⁹

It was inevitable that the KLA/KPC would be actively involved in the NLA. This was confirmed when the KPC noted on 13 April 2001 that its Chief of Staff, Gezim Ostrani, originally from Macedonia, had not returned from leave. He was suspended from the KPC over alleged involvement in the fighting in Macedonia which eventually required direct NATO intervention.¹¹⁰ The insurgents were also beginning to trade fire with NATO: “On March 7 2001, US troops shot and wounded two ethnic Albanian guerillas in a skirmish....The firefight demonstrated that the US Army’s original mission in Kosovo had changed....Their training focused on peace enforcement, not on the interdiction mission that confronted them once they arrived.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Christian Jennings, “NATO Forces Face New Threat In Balkans,” *Daily Telegraph*, 24/02/2001, URL: <http://portal.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml>, accessed 12 September 2001.

¹⁰⁸ “NLA Aims”, *Jane’s Defense Weekly*, 24 August 2001, URL: http://www.janes.com/defence/land_forces/news/jdw/jdw010824_3_n.shtml, accessed 21 September 2001.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ “Kosovo Leader Suspended Over ‘Rebel Links’”, *BBC World News Report*, URL: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/English/world/europe/newsid>, accessed 21 September 2001.

¹¹¹ Sean Naylor, “Gunfights and Guerillas: The mission in Kosovo has gotten more like combat”, *Army Times*, April 30 2001, 14.

The term “insurgency” was first used by the same US troops operating under KFOR command in MNB(E) and was employed to explain the missions that US forces were undertaking. Brigadier General Quinlan, the US commander in eastern Kosovo, said that his peacekeepers had the guerillas “on the run,” but admitted that the sudden appearance of the insurgencies (UCPMB, NLA) caught his force off guard.¹¹² A KFOR MNB commander was willing to use the word insurgency which had not been mentioned by COMKFOR or the US State Department in any description of the situation in Kosovo.

Securing the border between Kosovo and Macedonia was difficult due to geography and the risk of exposing peacekeeping troops to an armed insurgency. Recent journal articles have been more illuminating: “Doubts among NATO countries about assuming such risks have called into question KFOR’s willingness and capabilities to handle the (NLA) insurgency.”¹¹³

There were significant developments in defining the insurgency towards the end of 3 Cdo Bde’s tour. First, former members of the KLA and current members of the KPC were implicated in both the UCPMB and NLA. There was also a willingness by Western commentators to accurately label these groups as insurgents. Western patience with the ethnic Albanians was beginning to wear thin. Christian Jennings sums up the change in mood: “Two years ago the ethnic Albanian guerilla fighters of the KLA were the secret, anarchic darlings of the West. Now the worm has turned and international sympathy for the Kosovo Albanian cause is at an all time low.”¹¹⁴

With NATO troops exchanging gunfire with insurgents in Kosovo, it would be fair to assume that the KLA’s initial insurgency against the Serbs for independence has

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Justin Elridge, 41.

continued and exchanged Serbs with NATO and UNMIK as targets. Both organizations stand in the way of their often repeated end state—unconditional independence.

¹¹⁴ Christian Jennings, “UN warns Kosovars to stop ethnic cleansing.”

CHAPTER 5

KFOR: PEACEKEEPERS OR OCCUPYING FORCE?

The West Loses Patience

Western nations involved in either policing or administering Kosovo have begun to question the wisdom of their decision to actively support the KLA's insurgency against the Serbs. One key event was the burial of Daut Sulejmani on 24 March 2001. Sulejmani was a member of the UCPMB killed by Serb security forces in the Presevo Valley. As Judah comments, "Daut's death was used by the guerillas to symbolize the spirit of Greater Albanian nationalism, which many Western observers now believe is replacing Greater Serbian nationalism as the main threat to stability in the Balkans."¹¹⁵

The West is in a difficult position. Its reluctance to consider independence for Kosovo has led to an ethnic Albanian insurgency spreading into Serbia and Macedonia. This is what Judah terms the "Doomsday scenario." A major confrontation between Macedonian Slavs and Macedonian Albanians could have devastating effects. Serbia, Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey all have vital national interests in the area.¹¹⁶

Greece's northern province is called Macedonia. When the state of Macedonia gained independence from the FRY, the Athens government was concerned that its Slav population in its northern province would treat the precedent as an excuse for their own independence. This is the reason that Greece officially recognizes Macedonia as the Former Yugoslav Republic Of Macedonia (FYROM). Insistence on such a clumsy and somewhat ridiculous title for an independent, sovereign state underscores Greece's concerns about Balkan disorder affecting its own security.

¹¹⁵ Judah, *Survival*, 7.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Kosovo Is The Key

Kosovo was the birthplace of a wider ethnic Albanian insurgency; it is also where the international community can solve this regional problem. The problem is simple to define but hard to tackle. The solution has to be diplomatic and political: “International Community efforts to forestall Kosovo independence will result in an upsurge of violence and organized insurgency directed both at NATO and the UN.”¹¹⁷

But what should the international community do about the radical element of Kosovar society? A simple solution would be to simply grant the province independence and leave a primitive democracy to keep its own house in order. Unfortunately, this is unlikely to solve the problem. Kosovo’s current political and economic structures are shallow; if the international community were to disengage now, Kosovo would revert to its recent past—an unstable, criminal proto-state. Perception is important. If we do not take the opportunity to shape Kosovar society as proposed by Brigadier Fry, “The shallowness of the international commitment to Kosovo would be revealed and invite the contempt of observers within and outside Kosovo.”¹¹⁸

Contempt for KFOR and UNMIK already exists within the province, as radical Kosovars feel emboldened to make direct threats to the international community. Bardhyl Mahmuti, a strong Thaci supporter, told journalists after the municipal elections that “if western countries try to impose a status other than independence on Kosovo, it will be the making of a new war.”¹¹⁹ Such threats are tolerated as the international community has made a rod for its own back: “The International Community has

¹¹⁷ Eldridge, 34.

¹¹⁸ Brigadier Robert Fry MBE, 13.

¹¹⁹ Eldridge, 37.

remained engaged with radical elements which, in turn, has helped maintain their political legitimacy.”¹²⁰

Counterinsurgency and Peace Enforcement

The international community is concerned about UNMIK and KFOR becoming targets of a Kosovar insurgency but appears to be unable or unwilling to do anything about it. The fact that radical politicians from a tiny province can threaten the international community with seeming impunity is intolerable and could encourage other nascent independence movements to mimic their apparent success. Kosovo is a NATO PE operation; it must shift gears and deal effectively with the insurgency that it now faces.

The British experience in Malaya from 1948 - 1960 is a useful example of how to employ all elements of national power to secure a credible and long lasting solution.¹²¹ The result of COIN in Malaya was a prosperous, democratic, and peaceful state. The subordination of the military to civil control neutralized the insurgents with effective intelligence-led operations. The political and diplomatic element was just as important. The Malays were promised independence and were well prepared for it. Elections were held in 1955 and independence was granted in 1957. This process took time; the armed insurgency had to be defeated while lasting democratic structures were built from the grass roots.¹²²

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ The author acknowledges that Malaya was granted independence from the United Kingdom itself. Kosovo's unique problem is that the FRY is unwilling to grant independence to one of its constituent elements.

¹²² The Rand Corporation, D-20.

Shaping Kosovo

Western perceptions of the situation in Kosovo have changed radically since 1999. There is growing consensus with Judah's view that "the adventurism of a few in the Presevo Valley and Macedonia has confirmed a thorough reversal: 'Serbs are good, Albanians bad.' The Western media like their sound bites black and white, never grey."¹²³ This is perhaps the most useful way to change the international approach to Kosovo and shape it into a credible, independent state. The current PE approach endorsed by KFOR is having little discernable effect. Violence is being exported from Kosovo, and the ability of NATO forces to strike at the insurgents is hamstrung by the lack of an effective police force, far from an efficient judicial and legal system. The situation requires parallel lines of transformation outlined by Brigadier Fry—attitudinal, political and social, the first being a product of the other two.¹²⁴

The attitudinal approach requires changing the Kosovar perception that "might is right." This requires Kosovars to acknowledge that violence is unacceptable and those who choose that course will be punished. There are two complementary methods to achieve this. First, the use of the strike function of COIN to interdict, arrest, and imprison the insurgents. Second would be the development of an information campaign that marginalizes those willing to use violence. The fact that the LDK performed so well in the municipal elections shows that the majority of the population eschew the men of violence.

While the insurgents are isolated, UNMIK and the OSCE must work in a coordinated fashion to ensure political and social transformation. A definite goal is

¹²³ Judah, *Survival*, 15.

¹²⁴ Brigadier Robert Fry MBE, 12.

required now as much as an end state was required in Malaya. UN Resolution 1244 needs to be overhauled; it was at best a stop gap solution and must now be re-examined. Many of the assumptions upon which it was based are no longer valid. President Milosevic is now an unwilling guest at the Hague and the West has come to realize that they are facing an active insurgency in Kosovo.

The Requirement

UNMIK and KFOR must fundamentally change the way that they do business.

To that end:

- The United Nations must define Kosovo's end state in an unambiguous manner.
- The command relationships between HQ KFOR and its constituent brigades must be changed. KFOR cannot execute a coordinated response to an insurgency while each MNB commander has recourse to their national authority.
- NATO PSO doctrine must be overhauled; all contributing nations must realize that you can conduct COIN techniques in a PSO context. This could affect alliance cohesion in the short term but the current situation allows insurgents freedom to maneuver through some MNBs with impunity.
- UNMIK police must be properly resourced with good quality officers and equipment. They are the main means of striking the insurgents and should have the credible capability to do so.

- The judicial and penal systems in Kosovo must be overhauled. More prisons are needed, otherwise striking the insurgents is a waste of time. If a code of common law is hard to agree upon, perhaps military tribunals should be used.
- The international community must be prepared to spend considerable time and money to shape Kosovo.

Lessons For The Future

Before the West embarks upon future Peace Support Operations, a thorough strategic estimate must be carried out. The interpretation of what is really going on in Kosovo has changed radically over just two years. Was NATO really so myopic as to think that the KLA would simply drift back into civil society? Did the UN think that a vague promise on Kosovo's final status would satisfy a population who had been brutalized for generations? You cannot grow a stable and self sustaining democracy in the period of one American administration.

Future deployments of NATO troops require careful analysis before they are committed. Peace Support Operations include a spectrum of activities from simple peacekeeping tasks to more aggressive peace enforcement requirements.

The deployment of troops to Afghanistan (Post-Taliban) would require equally rigorous prior analysis. What are the interests of the various groups and factions? Has one group been fighting an insurgency or are they in open conflict with one another? What is the final status of Afghanistan going to be? Would an international force be keeping the peace or enforcing a settlement? As has been demonstrated in Kosovo, these

questions must be addressed and fully understood well before we commit troops or that commitment will remain open ended.

As George Bernard Shaw observed, it is relatively easy to win the war, it is infinitely harder to win the peace.

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